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To achieve significant educational change responsive to the major problems of our society, the following assumptions which continue largely to dominate education must be reexamined: (1) That education is a privilege to be enjoyed by those who are able to obtain it for themselves, and a form of charity for those less fortunate; (2) that a principal function of education is to separate and classify students by group and by level; (3) that education is exclusively a process by which the older generation transmits established knowledge to the younger generation; and (4) that education should be isolated from other aspects of political life. These revisions are necessary to implement an educational policy of the future which stresses the needs for (1) increased cooperation and cooperation and coordination with other agencies and groups in efforts to alleviate major social ills, (2) a shift in emphasis from teaching to learning, and (3) administrators who are aware of and responsive to the demands of their culture and community. (JH)

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THE GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

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Those of us who go around the country talking about education know that most of our speeches are forgotten as fast as they are delivered. But there are occasional exceptions, like the one George Counts, a professor at Teachers College, gave in 1932. He spoke to the annual convention of the Progressive Education Association, then in its heyday, on the question, "Dare the Schools Build a New Social Order?"

Counts's query produced interesting consequences, but it demonstrated that even widespread attention is not to be confused with action. Some took his question for a Marxist threat and were frightened. The Progressive Education Association spent a year thinking about it and reached a split decision. The majority of those who heard or read it dismissed the challenge as the hyperbole of an excited educationist. Whatever it was the country needed during those depression years, not many expected to find it in the schools.

When Counts spoke, education was still, in many minds, an optional luxury -- nice to have, but hardly a national necessity. Three wars, a technological revolution, and an unprecedented period of social upheaval have given a wholly new significance to the question of what education has to do with the country's future.

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The currents of influence that have been reshaping our society, our economy, our politics, our culture, and our personal lives for most of this century can be grouped into two major categories. Both have been well publicized. One group of forces arises from the increase in knowledge and the consequent advances in technology. Of these developments, the most spectacular have occurred in the natural sciences. Work with the atom and its component particles has dominated the scientific scene and has wrought fundamental changes in the lives of men and women throughout the earth.

In the life sciences, we are entering an era of discovery that is likely to produce consequences that are all but unimaginable. The work with D.N.A. and the breaking of the genetic code now carry man's knowledge and his power into what heretofore has seemed the most impenetrable of all mysteries, the nature of life itself.

We have also been advancing steadily, if with less dramatic results, in the social and behavioral sciences. In these disciplines, certainty is even more illusive than in the natural fields, for the variables are more numerous and the opportunities for controlled experimentation far more restricted. Even so, we know much more than we once did about the dynamics of human behavior, about the relationships among mental, emotional, physical, and social phenomena; about the ways growth and development are inhibited, altered, and facilitated. We have, for example, powerful evidence on the crucial importance of early childhood to all

subsequent personal development. We know that what once were considered uncontrollable hereditary defects can be corrected by early treatment and that through proper prenatal attention, some are fully preventable. We know that assumptions about the supposedly inherent limitations of human intelligence that once went unquestioned were no sounder than superstition; that the possibilities of people are far greater than we once thought them to be.

We try to quantify the knowledge explosion by noting that the typical university library must now expect to double its holdings twice in every generation. The growth of technology has been no less explosive. During the past forty years the production of electrical energy, for example, has increased in the U. S. eighteen times as fast as our population. Nuclear energy for common use is still a revolutionary concept, but already across the country a hundred nuclear generators are in existence or projected for early construction.

Modern transportation ties the world into an increasingly intricate network. It gives us wholly new measures of mobility, alters the character of cities, and drastically reshapes the life of the entire country. The instantaneous transmission of messages has eliminated the time factor in communication, but speed may be the least important gain in this process. What is of vastly greater significance is that at any given moment millions can now simultaneously hear the same message, see the same image and respond intellectually and emotionally to the same situation.

The new influences have so telescoped our sense of time and space that for all of us, in a physical sense, the globe has never seemed so small. But these same forces have enormously enlarged the sphere of our awareness. For all of us except the most isolated, the world of men in which we live is a larger world than any our forebears ever knew. People of whom our grandparents had barely heard are now our neighbors. We are disturbed by their anxieties, we feel threatened by their ambitions, and when their children are hungry, our consciences are troubled.

Many of the difficulties we face in the U. S. are directly affected and some are created by these changes. Daily the poor are reminded that poverty is neither universal nor inevitable but only unjust; that opportunity for the young is less the result of their own ability than of the neighborhood in which they happen to live; that a newborn baby's chance for survival at birth or starvation later can vary fatally if his parents stay in the wrong state. But while ugly gaps between those who have and those in want still disfigure our society, some of them are being closed. As we become increasingly aware of our needs, we are slowly learning to use our powers to realize our possibilities. As we see more clearly the difference between what is and what might be, we are moving with mounting vigor toward what ought to be.

There is throughout our society, especially among our young people, a remarkable growth in moral sensitivity, and in the readiness not only to express indignation but to join in correcting what is wrong. Beginning

with the civil rights revolution of a decade ago, we have witnessed a rising insistence, first on the equalization of opportunity and now on the right of all to join in making the decisions by which their lives are controlled. The emphasis young people have given to these changes and the energy they supply to promote them may be the most important gifts of the new generation to their society.

The difficulties in which we now find ourselves are not caused by these good, fresh, strong winds of change. The toughest problems arise rather from our widespread, habitual, institutionalized resistance to change. It is not the rapidity of change that should trouble us but the slowness of it. Why in a nation founded on the principle of universal freedom and dedicated to the ideal of human fulfillment should any man still feel it necessary to turn to violence to attain equality? Why today should any parent think he must disobey a public authority in order to gain for his child the equal protection of the law? Why should any minority of Americans, after decades of litigation that should never have been necessary still find itself so systemically rejected that some of its strongest members seriously propose racial separation as the only answe r?

The explanation may be that the spirit which from the beginning characterized our people and made our greatness possible is now badly inverted. Many of us, too many of us, are no longer behaving like young pioneers. Instead, we have become the aging settlers, so possessive of the territory we have won that we are obsessed with holding it. New horizons have lost their appeal, and all we care about is the security of

our fences. The sense of adventure that brought us forward has been dulled by affluence. Our purpose now is to stay put, to hold our own, and to play it safe.

But it is not my intention to deal with problems of American society in general. I want, rather, to focus on educational governance. It is becoming increasingly clear that we shall have educational change only if we can bring about institutional change. Before we can alter our institutions, however, we must alter the assumptions on which they were built and which largely continue to dominate them.

One of these assumptions is the still widely accepted view that education is a privilege which enables those who have it to rise beyond those who do not, a distinguishing benefit to be enjoyed by those who are able to obtain it for themselves and to be provided as a form of charity to those of the poor who are deemed to deserve it. Long since we should have been able to see that any such conception of education is not only obsolete but socially disastrous. Half a century ago Whitehead reminded us that, "In the conditions of modern life the rule is absolute. The race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed." If humane considerations fail to move us, the most selfish sense of community and national interest should persuade us that education is now a universal necessity.

Yet we continue to maintain our school establishment so as virtually to assure that the children who most desperately need the good schools usually get only the poorest, while those who already enjoy the advantages

of superior homes and community facilities almost always attend the best schools. The time is overdue to bring new knowledge, modern experience, and enlightened concepts of social justice to bear upon the design of our educational systems, to make of our schools what Horace Mann said education could be: "The great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance wheel of the social machinery."

Another assumption that has long dominated educational institutions, from the nursery school to the graduate professional level, is that one of their principal functions is to separate the less apt from the more able, the less reliable from the more responsible, the less acceptable from the more presentable. Thus, schools have served systematically to screen and classify students group by group, level by level. The school's judgment of the child, often made in early error, has frequently turned out to be a cruel, but self-fulfilling prophecy.

Everywhere in America we insist that the purpose of our educational system is to enable every young person to develop to the fullest whatever he has it in him to become. Yet before some children ever enter a public school they are given to understand in unmistakable terms that whatever <u>their</u> promise may be, it is not to be fulfilled in certain neighborhoods. Before they are seen as individuals, before even their names are known, it is decided that their presence will endanger what are called the "standards" of particular schools.

The screening process continues under many guises and for reasons

all too easy to understand. Less effort is required to sort children than to teach them. Advantaged pupils can be counted on to make any school look better than it is. And, ironically, it is the children most in need of skillful teaching who provide the customary defense for inept instruction.

The time has come to reject the concept of the school as a sorting machine and to make of it a place above all places where every child is not only admitted but accepted, not only taught but stimulated, not only measured but nurtured. Schools that meet the needs of today's world and today's children do more than help a child to make his mark. They give him also the chance to find his soul.

A third assumption we have only recently found cause to question. This is the idea -- indeed some would call it an absolute certainty -- that education is exclusively a process by which the older generation passes down to the younger whatever it considers useful and good. Now, clearly, this is one part of education. The passing down function may properly be called an obligation of the elders. The argument that every thirty years youth should rediscover fire and reinvent the alphabet strikes me as less than completely persuasive. There is something to be said for experience and even for conventional wisdom, and a good deal can be made of both, if old and young alike keep a decent respect for skepticism and open minds. The best teachers have always known that transmitting information, even sound knowledge, is not to be confused with the whole of education. Education is, most of all, learning, and

learning is one act in which each man, in his own time, must engage for himself. We must find new ways to protect and promote freedom to learn. Much of what today's young people need to know their parents and teachers have not yet learned. We could do worse than to admit that fact, set aside prejudice, forego false pride, and fashion fresh ways of learning together.

A fourth assumption that has characterized schools -- especially public schools -- is that education is safe only when it is isolated from other aspects of political life and insulated from other elements of government. When education was no more than an optional benefit, when the unschooled could succeed and often did, it was difficult to argue that educational policy had much to do with personal success or community well-being. And when in some places teaching posts were seen as political plums, as convenient rewards for the deserving and the faithful, it made good sense to protect schools and children from favoritism and partisan influence. The cumulative result, however, is that school boards now enjoy a degree of autonomy, giving them the status, virtually of a fourth branch of government.

Such isolation of school governance can no longer be justified, for today every aspect of social, political, economic and cultural life has its educational dimension. No new project of any consequence can be carried out and many cannot even be launched without the support of schools or universities. Neither the aspirations of families for their children nor the plans of corporations for their subsidiaries can be

carried through without regard for the quality and character of the educational enterprise. To continue to separate educational decision-making from other aspects of public policy is not only unrealistic, but in point of fact is rapidly becoming impossible.

While the school remains the most important single element in the educational system, it is by no means the only educative force. Not only is the school often less influential than other agencies; in many cases it badly needs their supplementary support. We must find ways to penetrate the walls and bridge the chasms that separate schools from other enterprises. So much of modern life depends on education; the network of educative agencies and influences is now so intertwined that schools must be seen in a broader context. The design of the educational system should reflect not past hazards but present hopes.

The point I have been trying to make is that we cannot have an educational system suitable for the times we live in unless we are prepared to reexamine our assumptions, revise or reject those that are no longer tenable and proceed from premises based on today's facts and tomorrow's probabilities.

It goes without saying that everything we have been reviewing carries heavy implications for the governance of education. It is because we have not responded to these implications, of course, that so many of our institutions and systems are in such deep trouble. We speak indignantly of disruptive elements on the campus and in the

community, as though the whole malaise were the invention of irresponsible opportunists or conspiring saboteurs, but no one who seriously tries to understand what is going on in this country and throughout the world could for one moment be satisfied with any such simplistic explanation.

But, let me get back to the problems of governance, and in particular to the governance of public education.

Governance in any enterprise begins with the making of policy, with the selection of purposes and priorities. Traditionally and customarily, still, we approach the development of educational policy by identifying principles that we like to think of as timeless and widely applicable. We try then to express such principles as objectives or goals and enshrine them as the dominant themes of our institutions and systems.

We have long subscribed to the fundamental values summarized in the phrase "respect for the individual." This commitment leads to the assertion that opportunity for personal development should be equally available to all in our society, that education should be universally available, with every person free to obtain and enjoy the benefits of personal development through learning.

Within the field of education itself other statements of broad principle flow from professional expertise. One thinks immediately of such formulations as the seven cardinal principles of secondary education, put forward by a select committee of educational leaders. Later came

the statement of goals and guides entitled "The Ten Imperative Needs of Youth." Following World War II the so-called "Prosser Resolution" gained currency. It was proposed intially to focus attention on the needs of large numbers of young people who were not adequately provided for in academic or vocational programs. The Resolution was later identified with what came to be called "life adjustment education." Because it was misunderstood and misinterpreted, the concept became the target of criticism that was often as irresponsible as it was undeserved.

More recently the term "quality education" has gained widespread attention. It is meant to suggest excellence in scholarly attainment and the sort of teaching that promotes it, but the term has become an unfortunate cliche that often obscures more than it reveals. Yet it does represent efforts to advance educational standards and performance.

Formulating and issuing broad generalizations is a necessary part of policy development. But such statements alone are not sufficient to produce sound educational programs.

Increasingly we must find ways to make our policies responsive to current circumstance, to the needs, the desires, and the interests of those with a stake in the educational enterprise. It is not only to the vocal, the visible, and the powerful that educational policy must be responsive. Most particularly, it must respond to the requirements of the unseen, the unheard, and the powerless, who heretofore have customarily been disregarded and neglected.

If in our time and in our country education is to be responsive, if

it is to meet the major problems of the time, our policies and our practices will have to be much more sharply focused upon the difficulties of poverty and disadvantage, upon the causes and the consequences of cultural deprivation, upon correcting inequities in opportunity, upon improving conditions which handicap large numbers of learners, upon the troubled concerns of parents, and upon the proper and too long disregarded grievances of teachers.

Whatever policies are set to guide any institution, their implementation calls for effective administration. It requires the establishment of suitable controls, procedures for monitoring operations, and arrangements for evaluating objectively and fairly the degree to which results reflect purposes. In the past, despite much talk to the contrary, as we have carried on these processes, we have placed heavy stress on uniformity, and conformity. In education, as in business and government generally, "standard operating procedure" is a widely respected and honored concept. The administrator most likely to be approved and rewarded has usually been the one who has shown his ability to execute standard policy and procedure with the least friction and the smoothest results. Skill in "keeping the lid on" and maintaining a favorable public image for the organization as a whole rank high among the qualities sought in superintendents and principals of schools. A corollary of this expectation is that the field officer's primary responsibility is to the central authority where

policy is set, only secondarily to the community or the pupils which his school or subdivision serves directly.

It is now dramatically plain that control in this form must yield to a new conception of administrative responsibility, a responsiveness colored less by loyalty to those higher in the hierarchy than by sensitivity to the needs and rights of those most directly dependent on administrative action. Control, to put it simply, must give way to accountability.

A third aspect of governance in education which needs revision has to do with the process of facilitation -- with the entire complex of services designed to make the enterprise effective. We administrators are fond of saying that everything we do has meaning only to the degree that it makes better teaching possible. We include a wide range of functions when we speak of improving instruction. The term and its connotations would be acceptable but for the fact that they are too short-sighted. Our ultimate end is not the improvement of instruction. It is the encouragement of learning. It is precisely this shift of emphasis from teaching to learning that gives the key to many of the changes that are now required in our governmental arrangements in school systems.

The shift of emphasis from the primacy of teaching to the primacy of learning will inevitably affect every aspect of school management.

It applies to the training and selection of teachers; it must influence the development of curricula, the supervision and improvement of instruction, the design of materials and the use of technological media. It will affect the time schedules by which schools are conducted and how the day and year are apportioned to particular purposes. Recent attention to the national assessment of education gets to the heart of this matter, for national assessment is focused not upon what teachers or other professionals are doing, but upon the consequences of learning as they are revealed in the actual performance of children and adults.

A superintendent must now be more than an executive who waits quietly for the school board to tell him what to do. He remains, of course, the board's chief executive officer, but merely getting things done efficiently is not the most important of his duties. He will serve his board, his community, and his professional colleagues far better if, in addition to his work as executive, he serves them as a leader in determining what it is that should be done. He should therefore possess the competence, the insight, the perceptiveness to analyze community and national problems. He must be able to read the signs -- political, social, economic,cultural -- to sense the emergence of issues before they explode as crises. Above all, he must understand the role of education in modern society. Seeing that the energies and processes of education are brought to bear upon the problems of people as individuals and as communities is the particular and transcendent responsibility of

the chief officer of any school district. It has become his main function to lead in formulating programs and policies and presenting them to the public as the effective leader in a democracy invariably does, in the manner of a master teacher. This is not to say that administrative duties should be neglected or handled as insignificant routines. It is to say that the primary business of the superintendent of schools today is to be a student of the culture and of the community, one of its central leaders, and a principal architect of its educational and social policies. Only incidentally can he be an administrator and most of that part of his work he must delegate to others.

Obviously the post is becoming more demanding than it ever has been before. It calls not only for rare personal qualities and exceptional preparation, but, most importantly, for the ability to adapt to new conditions and for the capacity to grow.

It follows that the superintendent must be supported by a staff superior in quality and size to those to which we are accustomed. The administrators and specialists composing his staff should be people who can free the superintendent to do his work effectively and to assure the schools and the community supporting services of the required range and quality. But we cannot expect to have either good superintendents or good staffs in districts that are too small or too poor to afford more than miniscule groups of mediocre people. The willingness of such people to try to be jacks of all trades neither excuses nor compensates for those who are masters of none.

We shall have neither educational programs nor the leadership we need unless we are prepared in many places to go much further than we have in reorganizing districts and developing effective and efficient staffing and operating procedures.

A third implication is that the superintendent must work closely with many more agencies than the public schools. If educative forces and agencies are to work together with the greatest benefit to the community, their work will have to be better coordinated than it ordinarily is today. It seems equally clear that someone in the community will have to be responsible for that coordination and for the leadership to make it possible and productive. This I see as the superintendent's job, whether or not it is specified in his contract. Inevitably, when he does what is called for, he finds himself working with the non-public schools; with health, welfare, and planning agencies; with mass media; with industry; and with every branch of government, at every level. More broadly and deeply than ever before, he is involved in the political processes of the community, working out compromises, reconciling pressures, and relating tactical options to strategic imperatives. All of this suggests conceptions of the public schools, of the educational enterprise, and of the relation between school government and other aspects of government quite different from those we are accustomed to. But as I examine the forces now at work on the American scene, the changes of the last two decades, and the nature

of the problems to which our people are now trying to respond, I find it impossible to reach any other conclusion. In the new systems of educational governance we now need,the superintendent of schools is the indispensable man.

The burden of such leadership is never light. It has never been heavier than it is today. In education, as in so many other fields, these are indeed times that try men's souls. They also try their intelligence, their wisdom, their competence and their faith. As we struggle through the current crises, it would be a serious error to assume that virtue will always and inevitably triumph. Good men are hurt and demagogues flourish in the brief glare of spotlights that cast into shadow much more than they reveal.

The very intensity of the conflict says as much about the magnitude of the new needs as it does about the resistive quality of the old forms that cannot accommodate these unfamiliar forces. Every day we are seeing illustrated the ancient truth that institutions endure only when they are sufficiently stable to serve their permanent purposes, yet sufficiently adaptable to respond to fresh demands and new conditions. These are the tests of institutions. They are the tests also of the men and women who bear responsibility for the leadership of those institutions.